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Local Crime Statistics Must Not Be Scrapped Legislative Assembly 24 November 2009

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — The Victorian government and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services are absolutely shameless in their massage and manipulation of crime data to suit their political purposes.

The latest attempt to spin the figures is the decision to abolish local crime statistics. Neighbourhood Watch volunteers believe their organisation may collapse as a result.

Why are these changes proposed? It is allegedly in the name of modernising the organisation. I would have thought that with the enormous expansion of information technology and Internet access for most households that this would be the perfect opportunity to extend the publication of figures on the Web.

No, modernisation in this context means only crime statistics for each municipality are available. While these statistics give some sense of the overall direction of the crime figures, they do not allow people to know what is happening in the area served, for example, by each 24-hour station. On the Mornington Peninsula there are three 24-hour stations.

The consolidated results are totally meaningless in the local context. It is no comfort to people in Mornington to know that even though their figures are going through the roof, the overall picture is not really bleak, because improvements have been made in Rosebud, Rye and Hastings.

The whole thing is absolute nonsense.

Crime is local. While it may suit police to manage a police service area, it is still the local community in each location that is affected. By all means publish consolidated figures on the web, but be honest and provide the local figures too so people can tell what is really going on.